



Cistercian College Roscrea

Substance Use Policy

Ratified October 20th 2010

- **Introduction**

Cistercian College Roscrea strives to be a Catholic community of learning, in which the students, committed to its care, live and pray, study and play and seek the truth, in harmony and mutual responsibility.

This Policy, which relates to the entire College community of Cistercian College Roscrea, is designed to minimise the possibilities of substance abuse by the students, and in order to clarify the procedures and possible sanctions that may be followed in the event of any inappropriate substance misuse. The College will work proactively to ensure that substance abuse does not take place.

- **Objective**

Cistercian College is committed to addressing the needs of the whole College community in relation to substance abuse. We realize that experimentation with drugs, alcohol and tobacco during adolescence does occur. Teenagers may feel indestructible and immune to the problems and consequences of their actions.

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the National Drugs Strategy. It is necessary that all involved work together to implement it. It is vital that parents/guardians actively co-operate with the College in implementing this policy to ensure that their children's health and safety is maintained.

In this policy "drug" means any substance which changes the way the body functions, mentally, physically or emotionally. The College recognises that drugs, both legal and illegal are available in the community generally and that the College, as part of the community, has an important role in terms of education, prevention and support, and in the handling of drug-related incidents.

The central objective of the College's Substance Use Policy is the welfare, and protection of every young person under its care, in line with the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The policy addresses concerns misuse of alcohol, tobacco and drugs and also the procedures for managing incidents relating to these substances.

- **Warning signs of Adolescent Substance Abuse**

Physical	Emotional	Family	School	Social Problems
Fatigue	Personality change	Starting arguments	Decreased interest	New friends who make poor decisions and are not interested in school activities
Repeated health complaints	Sudden mood changes	Negative attitude	Negative attitude	Problems with the law
Red glazed eyes	Irritability	Breaking rules	Drop in grades	Changes to less conventional styles in dress and music
Lasting cough	Irresponsible behaviour	Withdrawing from family	Many absences	
	Low self-esteem	Secretiveness	Truancy	
	Poor judgement		Lack of concentration	
	Depression		Apathy	
	General lack of interest		Giggly or high-spirited	

Early education about drugs, open communication, good role modelling and early recognition, if problems are developing, can help in the prevention, recognition and treatment of substance abuse.

Students at risk of developing a drug dependency include those:

- With a family history of substance abuse
- Who are depressed
- Who have low esteem
- Who feel they don't fit in

The variety of drugs students abuse are – alcohol, tobacco, prescribed medication, inhalers, over the counter cough, cold, sleep and diet medication, marijuana, stimulants, club drugs, depressants, heroin and steroids. This list is not exhaustive.

- **Types of Behaviour Deemed to be Inappropriate**

- The College does not accept the possession, use or supply of illegal drugs in the College, or on outside activities.
- The College does not accept the possession, use or supply of alcohol or tobacco in the College or on College activities by any student.
- The College does not accept the misuse of solvent-based substances. Students may not have in their possession prescribed or “over the counter” medicines.
- Students who are required to take prescribed medication must, along with their parents, inform the College Matron, who will have custody of these medicines and distribute as appropriate.
- The College Matron must be informed if a student has a medical condition. Relevant members of staff e.g. Gamesmaster must be informed also.
- A student or member of staff may not give another student any prescribed or “over the counter” medicine without direction from the College Matron.
- Chemicals in College laboratories will be held under lock and key. Students will handle and use such substances only under their teacher’s supervision.
- The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is highlighted as being incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity. The Director of Sport, Gamesmaster and Sports Coaches will ensure that those in their care are aware of the harmful effects and the illegality of the use of drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances. The College is resolute in its opposition to the use of performance enhancing drugs.

- **Training and Development**

The College is committed to providing an Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Education Programme for all. Our educational aims consist of:

Students:

- SPHE Programme – The College offers all its students drug education programmes within the context of their SPHE classes. TY students will study First Aid.
- Reading of this policy, copies of which will be given to all new staff and parents of new pupils as part of their induction to the College.
- Hearing outside speakers invited by the College where appropriate.
- Being giving clear and age-appropriate information on drugs.

Staff:

- The College will facilitate training for staff involved in the SPHE programme.
- All staff will be given drug information and awareness training regularly.
- Specific training will be made available to key staff in relation to managing drug-related incidents.
- First Aid training will be given to all staff.
- Teachers and Housemasters are given drug-awareness training, SPHE training or other relevant training on a regular basis.

Parents/Guardians:

.Parents/Guardians will be consulted on the need for drug education and will be informed of what is happening in the College. Drug information and drug awareness sessions are organised for parents annually.

- The Parents Council works with the President in organising presentations, as are appropriate for the age profile of classes.

- **Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Substance Use:**

The College and student needs must be taken into consideration.

Staff:

- Staff members inform themselves with regard to their legal obligations relating to the issue of substance use.
- All staff keep themselves informed as regards the changing trends surrounding this issue and also be aware of best practice.
- All staff members will keep an eye out for signs of substance abuse among the student population (mood swings, loss of appetite, apathy etc.)
- Take time to listen and assess before responding.
- Separate fact from rumour.
- In situations of confirmed use, possession or supply, all details must be recorded and acted upon.
- Staff will inform the President of any incident involving substance abuse regarding which they have become aware.

Students:

- Students should discuss any incident of substance use with a Housemaster, Teacher or other staff member within the College; this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.
- Confidentiality is a complex issue. The well being and welfare of the student and staff member must be a primary focus.

Parents/Guardians:

- Parents/Guardians are expected to contact the President regarding incidents of substance use which might have come to their attention through their children or through other parents.

Managing Drug-related Incidents

- The President will be made aware of any incident involving substance abuse.
- Such a matter will be dealt with seriously and confidentially.
- A limited number of people will be involved in all suspected or confirmed drug incidents. People will be informed on a “need to know” basis. All written records will be held confidentially by the President. Parents/Guardians will be involved. They will be informed sensitively and support offered to them.
- Sanctions may be imposed, including
 - a) Withdrawal of privileges, games, day trips etc.
 - b) Detention
 - c) Going on report
 - d) Suspension
 - e) Expulsion
- In order to appeal a decision, a parent/guardian may request a review by writing to the President as outlined in the Code of Behaviour.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that substance use does not continue.

Gardaí

- In the case of illegal drugs the President or Dean will contact the Gardaí, and /or Juvenile Liaison Officer, and such drug related-matters will be dealt with by the Gardaí. In response to such incidents, pastoral support will be offered.

Media

- The President will handle all media enquiries. They will not comment on individual cases but will refer to the College policy and procedures in place to manage any drug related incident.

Report

- A full report of the drug incident is completed, and kept by the President.

• Pastoral Care

The College has an effective pastoral care system in place and reports of all incidents (wherever they may have been reported) will be filtered through the House Master, Year Master and Class Tutor who has pastoral care of the students in his/her class.

- In response to all incidents pastoral support will be offered to the particular Student, Parents/Guardians, Staff and other Students involved in the incident.
- Meetings concerning such incidents will take place between the Dean, Year Heads, Student and Chaplain.

Chain of support: Teacher/Housemaster /Dean/President/Board of Governors.

The College Chaplain directs this Pastoral Care.

• Review and Evaluation

There is a Drug Policy Co-ordinator appointed by the President, who will monitor the Policy once a term to ensure that it is of practical benefit to the College. The result will be recorded and made available to the President.

The Matron (or whoever) is the College Drug Policy Co-ordinator.

This Co-ordinator will be in regular contact with the relevant agencies and authorities relating to the control of substance use.

- A representative of the staff will be in regular contact with the relevant agencies and authorities relating to the control of substance use. Staff liaise with the relevant authorities and make them aware when an incident arises.

Monitoring will be based on:

- a) Drug Education Programmes
- b) Managing Drug related incidents
- c) Parent, Staff and Management Training

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

College Staff, Parents/Guardians, Students and Board of Governors will be involved in the evaluation of this policy when it has been in place for one year. Again the three specified areas above will be evaluated.